

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.
Sunday August 4, 2019. "At the Movies: Up"

I. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Sunday & Scripture.

Sunday we kicked off our "***At the Movies***" series and this year it's on the topic of relationships...of every kind. Our very own Angela Barnett started us off with a general look at why relationships are important. The movie she used was Pixar's "***Up***", which is an incredible movie, and features relationships in very different but important ways. If you haven't watched this movie, I can highly recommend it. But make sure you have some tissues nearby.

Since Angela began this series with a look at relationships in general, we'll start with some general questions about relationships.

What do healthy relationships mean to you?

What do you expect from the relationships in your life?

What makes maintaining healthy relationships difficult?

There were several scripture passages used with specific reasons why relationships matter. So read each of the passages, none of them are very long, and then answer the questions for each one.

1. We were created for relationships.

Genesis 2:18. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

In the story of creation God said it's not good for us to be alone. We were made to be in relationship with God and with others. It's built into our DNA and all of creation. Many of the poor choices we make are because we're alone or in unhealthy relationships. Solid, strong, live-giving relationships will always make us better people.

How and when have you experienced this truth?

What makes relationships important to you?

2. God commands us to be in relationships.

Matthew 22:36-40. 1 John 4:7-13.

Since we were not created to be alone, God told us what is at the core, the center of our relationships. And that is love. The selfless, sacrificial, lessening of self for the benefit and betterment

of each other. This kind of love is at the core of who we are, why we were created by God, and the energy that holds relationships together.

The Matthew 22 passage boils down all of the laws of the Old Testament to just two laws. Love God, love others. Jesus even said all of the laws, over 600 of them, were contained in these two commandments. Love is the reason God created us, and calls us his own. And it's in this love, we can grow and nurture those important relationships in our lives.

What does scriptural love mean to you?

How have you experienced what you would define as scriptural love?

3. God is made real and tangible through relationships.

1 John 4:12.

This passage states that the love of God finds its full expression in relationships. Unless we're in a relationship with God, and with others, there is no way we can fully experience this love that comes from God and makes our life complete. Trying to find God or experience him outside of meaningful relationships is just about impossible.

What makes relationships a challenge in experiencing this kind of love?

4. God positions us for blessing through relationships.

There was no scripture given for this truth, but all of the above teachings all come together at this important point...and we know it. Angela told a story of how lives are impacted for the better when people make the commitment to be in relationship with each other. Most likely all of the great stories we would tell of growth in our lives come from important people we've done life with. And we are better people because of the people we let into our lives.

Think about significant relationships in your life. Who can you point to, and what story can you tell about someone who invested in your and you're a better person for it.

IV Challenge.

God is the author and sustainer of relationships, and they are richer and more fulfilling when we make him the center of the important relationships in our lives. Jesus nailed it when he was asked what the greatest commandments were. Love God...love others.

And when we form relationships and nurture them by investing time and energy into them, we can find the purpose, meaning, and we were created for. That's the purpose and benefit of positive healthy relationships in our lives. And that'll be what the next four weeks is about. We hope you join us for the **"At the Movies"** series and some more practical wisdom for our ordinary, everyday walking around lives.